

# DOINGWHATWORKS



## SLIDESHOW

Full Details and Transcript



## Working Together to Meet Students' Needs

Young Scholars' Academy for Discovery and Exploration (P.S. 636), New York  
January 2011

**Topic** INCREASED LEARNING TIME

**Practice** STRUCTURE TIME

### Highlights

- » Literacy coach Joyce Knights explains the benefits of partnering with a community-based organization to provide more staffing, academic support, and resources to students as part of the longer school day.
- » Community educators encourage students to read books that are appropriate for their reading level and provide literacy enrichment activities.
- » Community educators align their literacy activities with the curriculum taught by regular school teachers; they have access to student-level data and partner with the school teachers to show students that the school and the nonprofit are not two separate entities; rather, they work together as two parts of one longer school day.

**About the Site** Young Scholars' Academy for Discovery and Exploration  
Brooklyn, NY

### Demographics

- » 60% Black
- » 37% Hispanic

- » 2% White
- » 1% Asian
- » 98% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch
- » 7% English Language Learners
- » 13% Special Education

(The New York State School Report Card, 2008-09 and The Afterschool Corporation Newsletter, 2010)

New York City's P.S. 636, The Young Scholars' Academy for Discovery and Exploration, partners with parents, youth, The After School Corporation, and community-based organizations to offer integrative and innovative approaches to decision-making and support activities. To improve the school climate and institute a successful longer day, the school:

- » Offers a school day lengthened by 35%
- » Provides more individualized and engaging instruction, enrichment activities, and sports
- » Offers Saturday instruction to students needing extra support
- » Conducts internal and external evaluations to track progress and plan for implementation improvement

## Full Transcript

### Presentation Title: **Working Together to Meet Students' Needs**


Young Scholars' Academy for Discovery and Exploration, Brooklyn, NY




Joyce Knights, a literacy coach, knows that she can depend on the support of young instructors from a community-based organization for teaching reading, writing, listening, and presentations skills. These instructors help teachers in the classroom and provide additional literacy enrichment after regular school hours.




### Slide 1: **Encouraging students to read**


 **Text:** Young Scholars' Academy for Discovery and Exploration expanded its academic day by 35%. To enable this initiative, the school partnered with a community-based organization, University Settlement. Together, they developed a plan to provide additional individualized attention and resources for students who may not receive literacy enrichment at home.

 **Audio:** University Settlement staff provide support to Young Scholars' Academy in several ways. I don't think that we would be as successful as we are right now if it wasn't for the dedicated staff from University Settlement. There's a lot of things that they do in literacy. For example, they have Taskmasters of Literacy. The books that they have there are leveled, and so that's very helpful to us as teachers. When we assign homework we ask the children to read for 40-45 minutes every night. And it's a challenge for us, because a lot of the students do not have appropriate books at home to read, and when we allow them to take some of the library books home from our classroom libraries, many times they don't return it. So just having another place for the kids to borrow books from is wonderful.




## Slide 2: Reading is important


 **Text:** A variety of literacy activities are aimed at instilling in students the notion that reading is important. Every day before dismissal, the expanded part of the school day includes "DARE time," in which students and the entire staff spend 20-25 minutes reading books. Instructors help students select books that are appropriate for their reading level. The level of the books can vary depending on whether students practice silent independent reading or read aloud with a community educator.

 **Audio:** They have an Open Access program where the children are free to go in and choose books at their leisure. The staff, they know the students' reading levels, and so if they see them reading books that are not appropriate for them, they remind them that they should be reading their "just right" books. So that's a wonderful support as well.




### Slide 3: Engaging instruction


 **Text:** After 3 pm, community educators use a structured curriculum that mirrors the curriculum used by classroom teachers. However, they don't just provide "more of the same." They build on technology, arts, and connecting literature to students' lives to spark students' interest and keep them engaged. Students also participate in competitions and special projects. For example, during the expanded part of the school day, students engage in creative book report projects such as book posters.

 **Audio:** They have a kids' lit program, and it's very similar to what we do with our students during the day in guided reading. It's a five-step approach where they are introduced to the book, they read the book, they have a discussion on what the book is about, and then they connect it to their own lives. And we think that's very important, because a lot of times children read passages and they're not able to make that connection. For example, "How does this story relate to me? How is this character similar to me and what I am doing in my life?" So the fact that they have that connect piece is very important. And then the final piece for them is wrapping up the story. So they read a wide variety of engaging literature at the after-school program, the University Settlement program. And so I think everything we do in the day, it's transferred over into University Settlement.




### Slide 4: Not two separate programs


 **Text:** The collaboration between teachers and community educators is seen when a teacher and a community educator teach together in the classroom. It is also seen in joint planning periods and organization of schoolwide events and assemblies. It sends a message that says, "We are a community, and we are all here to meet your needs."

 **Audio:** At the end of the day, having the University Settlement staff and the day classroom teachers together working with the children, I think that sends a clear message to them that we're all working together, and it's one long day; it's not two separate programs.




### Slide 5: Data-driven decision making


 **Text:** Community educators participate in team meetings and exchange information about students' strengths and weaknesses. That facilitates data-driven instructional decision making and enables the literacy coach to better prepare for addressing the needs of all students. It also promotes alignment between classroom instruction and the expanded part of the school day.

 **Audio:** I do quite a few things, and it can be very stressful and very challenging. And so having the University Settlement staff here in the school, it does decrease some of the stress that I feel, some of the burden that I have. And it does this in many different ways. So I mentioned the SST meetings, Scholar Study Teams. Jackie, who is one of the University Settlement staff, she typically sits in on these meetings. As we're studying students, particularly those who are struggling socially or academically, she gives us some additional insight into the needs of that child. So once the meeting is over, we have a better understanding of how we can address the needs of that child.



### Slide 6: Conclusion

 **Text:** The literacy coach's work is facilitated in a number of ways by the presence of community educators. First, classroom management is made easier by having a community educator teaching groups of students in the classroom. Second, the literacy coach is better informed about students' responses to intervention. Third, the additional instruction using an aligned curriculum accelerates the growth of all students, especially those without parental support or adequate books at home.

 **Audio:** Having University Settlement staff makes things just less challenging for me and helps me to meet my goals. So having them in the classroom for 50 minutes—if we didn't have University Settlement within our school, I think that teachers would have more of a need for assistance from me. For example, the 50-minute block of time that we have at the end of the school day is an opportunity for the teachers to work with the Level 1 and Level 2 students. They can use the data to directly target those students, while the other children are being provided with enrichment activities from University Settlement.